DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MP
REVIEWED BY J.M.Razi DATE May 6, 1982
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CONFIDENTIAL
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ASSISTANT SECRETARY
NEA

September 30, 1957

FROM : NEA - William M. Rountree

SUBJECT : Expediting Military Equipment and Clothing to Libya

Discussion

In April of 1956, in order to persuade the Libyan Government to decline offers of military and economic assistance proffered by the Soviet Union, we undertook to provide Libya with military equipment sufficient to equip an additional 1,000 men for the Libyan army. This equipment was to be delivered following a survey of Libya's military requirements by a United States Military Survey Team. The survey was completed and we then proceeded to negotiate a Military Assistance Agreement with Libya which would provide for the establishment of a Military Assistance Advisory Group to fulfill this commitment to Libya.

Unfortunately, the Military Assistance Agreement was not signed until June 30, 1957, which was too late to make use of funds ($1,575,000) programmed for this purpose. Consequently, it has been necessary to program funds for this purpose from 1958 appropriations. It does not appear likely that under normal procedures any equipment or clothing can be delivered to Libya before late December. The Libyan Government, however, has recently requested us both through our Embassy in Libya and through the Libyan Ambassador at Washington to expedite the delivery of uniforms and equipment so that they can arrive in Libya as soon as possible.

I believe we should make every effort to meet the Libyan request for prompt delivery of uniforms and materiel. I believe this is particularly important at a time when the Soviets are trying to expand their influence and prestige in the Middle East and in view of the considerable length of time which has already elapsed since we made our commitment to Libya to provide the equipment for the 1,000 men.

Recommendation

That you sign the attached letter to Mr. Sprague, Assistant Secretary of Defense requesting his personal assistance in expediting the acquisition and delivery of military equipment and uniforms to the Libyan Government.

Attachment:

Letter to Mr. Sprague.

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OCT 18 1957
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NEA:AF:AEM:DSMcAfee:sct 9-25-57

Concurrence

NEA/AFO

M/MSA - Mr. Barnes

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